

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-806  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2016**

*Administration and Management  
Records Management, 1-8*

**NWS Vital Records Management**

**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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**OPR:** W/CF02 (B. Edler)

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This directive supersedes NWSI 1-806 *NWS vital Records Management*, dated June 29, 2007. Changes were made to reflect the NWS Headquarters reorganization effective April 1, 2015. No content changes were made.

SIGNED

September 12, 2016

John E. Potts

Date

Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer

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1. Introduction. This Instruction defines the procedures for protecting and maintaining vital records essential to National Weather Service (NWS) emergency functions and describes minimum program office responsibilities for vital records-related Continuity of Operations (COOP). NWS follows NOAA, DOC, and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) guidelines for the identification and maintenance of vital records.

2. Authority. Heads of agencies are responsible for the vital records program under the following authorities:

a. To make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the agency's organization, functions, policies, procedures, decisions, and essential transactions, and to furnish information to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities (44 U.S.C. 3101).

b. To perform national security emergency preparedness functions and activities (Executive Order 12656).

2.1 Objectives. Vital records programs identify and protect emergency operating records specifying how the agency will function during an emergency or disaster. Each NWS Office is responsible for identifying their vital records and contingency planning activities required to function following disasters and emergencies. Only those records essential to the continuity and/or resumption of NWS' mission-critical functions require specific identification and protection.

2.2 Vital Records Defined. Vital records are hard copy or electronic records necessary to maintain continuity of operations during an emergency or disaster, to recover full operations following a national security emergency or disaster, and to protect the legal rights and interests of citizens and the U. S. Government. These records are critical to the implementation of the Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan. The two basic categories of vital records are emergency operating records and legal and financial records.

2.2.1 1 Emergency Operating Records. Records essential to continued operations of NWS include emergency plans, directives, orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments, selected program records required to continue the most critical agency operations, and related policy and procedural records. These records must be identified to assist the Homeland Security Program Office during emergency conditions and in resuming normal operations following an emergency. Vital records must be available at relocation sites or readily accessible electronically. Examples of Emergency Operating Records are software and data necessary to resume NWS operations from a location other than Headquarters.

2.2.2 Legal and Financial Records. Records required to preserve the legal rights and interests of individual citizens and the Federal Government. They are not required at relocation sites since the records would not be needed immediately. Designed and approved alternate site locations and/or Federal Records Centers may be used for dispersal storage. Examples of these records are those containing proof of ownership, financial interest (e.g., payroll, leave, social security, retirement, insurance), legal proceeding decisions, and research

(e.g., data, programs).

3. Responsibilities. The Assistant Administrator for Weather Services is responsible for vital records (see Section 2, Authority).

3.1 The Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer, Management and Organization Division, Vital Records Liaison, is responsible for:

- a. assisting the NOAA Vital Records Officer in identifying new vital records and those records no longer considered vital,
- b. assisting the Vital Records Officer in determining the appropriate method of protecting their vital records,
- c. arranging for duplication of hard copy vital records for off-site storage,
- d. coordinating transfer of duplicated vital records to the appropriate off-site storage facility,
- e. maintaining an adequate supply of transmittal forms and box labels (NOAA Form 62-22) used for off-site storage of vital records,
- f. maintaining copies of completed transmittal forms and the Vital Records Inventory for the organizational area,
- g. having a plan and instructions in place for COOP officials to retrieve,
- h. ensuring that vital records stored off site are updated in accordance with the Vital Records Inventory schedule,
- i. assisting NWS Office Coordinators in identifying vital records; preparing required Inventories, and responding to questions on collecting, properly storing, and updating NWS vital records,
- j. updating the Vital Records Inventory and submitting a yearly report of records stored off site, and,
- k. reviewing and consolidating Office Vital Records Coordinator's reports into a single report showing compliance, partial compliance, or non-compliance of each NWS Office for submission to the NOAA Records Officer.

3.2. Responsibilities of Office Directors, Regional Directors, and National Center Directors. Each NWS Office, Regional, National Center or Program Director is responsible for identifying and maintaining his or her vital records program. NWS Office Directors, Regional Directors and Center Directors will designate a Vital Records Coordinator responsible for a specified program area.

3.3 Responsibilities of Office, Regional, and National Center Vital Record Coordinators. Coordinators are responsible for managing and maintaining their vital records programs. Identified vital records must be appropriately distinguished to meet Office contingency planning requirements.

4. Procedures. Each NWS Office will conduct an annual review of their vital records. The data collected from the annual review will be combined into the Inventory by the Office Vital

Records Coordinator. NWS Office Coordinators will prepare a Vital Records Inventory (NOAA Form 66-22) for their program area of responsibility. The Inventory includes:

1. office of record
2. mission function
3. vital records description
4. location
5. off-site location
6. media
7. frequency of updates
8. time needed
9. contacts
10. volume
11. justification, and
12. type of vital record

A signed memorandum transmitting the Inventory will be provided both in hard copy and electronically to the NWS Vital Records Liaison. The NWS Vital Records Liaison will compile the Office Inventories received into one NWS Inventory for retention by the NOAA Vital Records Officer. The Office Vital Records Coordinator will maintain the Inventory for the organizational area of responsibility.

5. Maintenance of Vital Records. Records identified as vital records are stored in remote locations or in Federal Records Centers in accordance with the prescribed Office Emergency Operating Plan. Records stored off-site are known to appropriate emergency employees, as defined in DAO 210-2.

5.1 A Vital Records Inventory (NOAA 66-22) will be sent, as prescribed in the Inventory, to a designated site approved by the NOAA Vital Records Officer and coordinated with other affected NWS Offices. Legal and Financial Vital Records may be stored at a Federal Records Center. (see Section 2.2.2)

5.2 Shipping Vital Records. Each vital record item identified for shipping on the Inventory shall be wrapped separately. A Vital Records Package Label, NOAA Form 62-22, must be affixed to each package.

5.3 Update Inventory. Records will be maintained in accordance with the Inventory. Updated records will replace existing records on a one-for-one basis in an established cycle unless otherwise indicated on the Inventory.

6. Disposition of Original Vital Records. Disposition is governed by NARA approved NOAA/NWS records schedules. Original records that are not scheduled may not be destroyed or deleted. For NOAA's General Housekeeping Records Schedules 100 and 200 and NWS specific Chapter 1300, click on NOAA's Records Management web site, NOAA Records Schedules, link below:

[http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/audit/records\\_management/schedules/](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/audit/records_management/schedules/)

## APPENDIX A DEFINITIONS

*Contingency planning\** means instituting policies and procedures to mitigate the effects of potential emergencies or disasters on an agency's operations and records. Contingency planning is part of the continuity of operations planning required by Federal preparedness Circulars and other guidance issued by the federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Executive Order 12656.

*Continuity of Operations (COOP)\*\** is a plan and a program which ensures that the "essential" functions will continue in the event of a disruptive activity focused on, or a threat to the Department, NOAA, NWS, its personnel, or its facilities that is generated by man or by natural causes.

*Cycle\** means the periodic removal of obsolete copies of vital records and their replacement with copies of current vital records. This may occur daily, weekly, quarterly, annually or at other designated intervals.

*Disaster\** means an unexpected occurrence inflicting widespread destruction and distress and having long-term adverse effects on agency operations. Each agency defines what a long-term adverse effect is in relation to its most critical program activities.

*Emergency\** means a situation or an occurrence of a serious nature, developing suddenly and unexpectedly, and demanding immediate action. This is generally of short duration, for example, an interruption of normal agency operations for a week or less. It may involve electrical failure or minor flooding caused by broken pipes.

*Emergency operating records\** are that type of vital records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organization during and after an emergency. Included are emergency plans and directive(s), orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments, selected program records needed to continue the most critical agency operations, as well as related policy or procedural records that assist agency staff in conducting operations under emergency conditions and for resuming normal operations after an emergency.

*Legal and financial rights records\** are that type of vital records essential to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of the individuals directly affected by its activities. Examples include accounts receivable records, social security records, payroll records, retirement records, and insurance records. These records were formerly defined as "rights-and-interests" records.

*National security emergency\** means any occurrence, including natural disaster, military attack, technological emergency, or other emergency, that seriously degrades or threatens the national security of the United States, as defined in Executive Order 12656.

*Off-site storage* means a facility\* other than an agency's normal place of business where vital records are stored for protection. This is to ensure that the vital records are not subject to damage or destruction from an emergency or disaster affecting an agency's normal place of business.

*Vital records*\* means essential agency records that are needed to meet operational responsibilities under national security emergencies or other emergency or disaster conditions (emergency operating records) or to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and those affected by Government activities (legal and financial rights records).

- \* Code of Federal Regulations - 36 CFR §1236.14:  
<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5&node=36:3.0.10.2.25>  
NOAA Vital Records Program:  
[http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative\\_orders/chapter\\_210/210-2.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_210/210-2.html)
- \*\* Department of Commerce Organization Order (DAO) 210-1:  
[http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao210\\_1.html](http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao210_1.html)



## **APPENDIX B REFERENCES**

NARA Management of Vital Records

<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/vital-records/>

36 CFR Part 1236

<http://www.archives.gov/about/regulations/part-1236.html>

Executive Order 12656, Assignment of emergency preparedness responsibilities:

<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12656.html>

NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 210-2, Vital Records Program:

[http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative\\_orders/chapter\\_210/210-2.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_210/210-2.html)

NOAA Form 67-22, NOAA Vital Records Inventory

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/-noaaforms/eforms/nf6222rl.pdf>

NWS Policy Directive 18 Records Management (NWSPD 18)

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd00108curr.pdf>

NWSI 10-2202 Continuity of Operations

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/sym/pd01022002curr.pdf>